Remarks

Prior to this communication, claims 19 – 25 and 27 are pending. Claims 19 – 25 and 27 were rejected. By this amendment, claims 19, 21 – 24, and 27 have been amended; and claims 30 and 31 have been added. Examination and reconsideration of the claims in view of the following remarks are respectfully requested.

35 U.S.C. §103 Rejections

Claims 19 – 25 and 27 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103 (a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Application No. 2002/0125627 ("Hand") in view of U.S. Patent No. 7,014,029, Provisional Application No. 60,337,409, and U.S. Application No. 2003/0111316 ("Winters"), and further in view of U.S. Patent No.6,564,409 ("Juds").

Independent claims 19 and 27 have been amended.

Claim 19 is directed to "a gaming machine" that includes, among other things, "an annunciator having an array of illuminating elements configured to be illuminated in first, second, and third illuminating patterns, the first illuminating pattern being different from the second illuminating pattern, and the first illuminating pattern being different from the third illuminating pattern," and "a controller … configured … to sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, and third patterns repetitively, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being above the value, and to sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, third, and second patterns repetitively, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being below the value."

As indicated on page 2 of the Action that Hand "lacks specificity as to first and second counters and accepting the bills at the same rate." However, the Examiner also indicated that Hand "teaches a bill acceptor for receiving bills tendered, the bill acceptor comprising a sensor for evaluating each inserted bill after it has been inserted in the bill acceptor and outputting a signal which is used by the gaming machine to determine whether to accept or reject that bill," and "annunciators on the bezel of the bill acceptor (Fig. 3)." (Pages 2 and 3, of the Action.)

Amended claim 19 is not anticipated by Hand. Specifically, Hand does not anticipate, among other things, "a gaming machine" that includes, among other things, "an annunciator having an array of illuminating elements configured to be illuminated in first, second, and third illuminating patterns, the first illuminating pattern being different from the second illuminating pattern, and the first illuminating pattern being different from the third illuminating pattern," and "a controller ... configured ... to sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, and third patterns repetitively, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being above the value, and to sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, third, and second patterns repetitively, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being below the value," as recited in claim 19.

Rather, Hand discloses a plurality of indicators on bezel 24. Specifically, Hand discloses that the indicators include

> a $1 indicator 40, $5 indicator 42, $10 indicator 44, $20 indicator 46, $50 indicator 48 and $100 indicator 50 which display the denomination of received and accepted notes. In addition, the runway surface may have a "reject" indicator 52, to visually display when an unacceptable bill has been inserted and rejected. Additional indicators located on the display surface 36 of the enhanced bezel may include a system lock indicator 54, counterfeit bill indicator 56, transport jam indicator 58 and service indicator 60. The display surface 36 may also include additional indicators for the host machine, such as a diagnostic indicator 62, coin indicator 64, machine service indicator 66 and validator note box full indicator 68.

(Paragraph [0021]) Each of the indicators has a specific function. Hand, however, does not teach or suggest any of the indicators are formed into "first, second, and third illuminating patterns," as recited in claim 19.

Even if Applicant were to construe that the indicators to include the claimed "first, second, and third illuminating patterns," as recited in claim 19, Hand does not teach or suggest the indicators **"sequentially"** energize "the first, second, and third patterns **repetitively**, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being above the value," and **"sequentially** energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, third, and second patterns **repetitively**, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being below the value," as recited in claim 19. (Emphasis

added.) Applicant notes that embodiments of repeated sequences have been illustrated in the Specification with respect to FIGS. 4 and 5, and discussed in paragraphs [0046] – [0050]. For example, paragraph [0047] indicates that

> [u]nder the control of the lighting system 58, in State 0, all of the LED's 62 remain de-energised. Thereafter, in a first state, the first LED 62 in each row is energised. By "first" is meant those LED's furthest from the slot 44. In the second state, the first LED's 62 remain energised and the second LED's 62 are also energised. Similarly, in the third and fourth states the third LED 62 in each row 64 and fourth LED 62 in each row 64 are energised, respectively. In State 5, the first LED's 62 are de-energised while the remaining LED's 62 in each row remain energised. In the sixth state, the second LED 62 in each row 64 is de-energized.

(Paragraph [0047])

Winters does not cure the deficiencies of Hand.

Rather, Winters discloses that "the counter software will check to see if the ratio of Faux to (Faux + Real) exceeds a selected threshold." (Paragraph [0019], Provisional, Winters.) Winters further discloses that "when that threshold is exceeded," "a notation is made in a log indicating the time of the event," "notify authorized personnel ... via the phone line," "reject all coins," or "halt the transaction." (Paragraph [0019], Provisional, Winters.)

Thus, Winters does not cure the deficiencies of Hand with respect to at least , "a gaming machine" that includes, among other things, "an annunciator having an array of illuminating elements configured to be illuminated in first, second, and third illuminating patterns, the first illuminating pattern being different from the second illuminating pattern, and the first illuminating pattern being different from the third illuminating pattern," and "a controller ... configured ... to sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, and third patterns repetitively, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being above the value, and to sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, third, and second patterns repetitively, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being below the value," as recited in claim 19.

Before proceeding further, the Examiner indicated on page 3 of Action that "[t]he 103 combination of [Hand] and [Winters] would thus activate an annunciator when the computed bill acceptance rate falls below a predetermined value. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to have applied the first and second counters and threshold of [Winters] to the gaming device of [Hand]."

Again, neither Hand nor Winters, either alone or in combination, teaches or suggests "an annunciator having an array of illuminating elements configured to be illuminated in first, second, and third illuminating patterns, the first illuminating pattern being different from the second illuminating pattern, and the first illuminating pattern being different from the third illuminating pattern," and "a controller ... configured ... to sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, and third patterns repetitively, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being above the value, and to sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, third, and second patterns repetitively, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being below the value," as recited in claim 19.

Juds does not cure the deficiencies of Hand and Winters with respect to "an annunciator having an array of illuminating elements configured to be illuminated in first, second, and third illuminating patterns, the first illuminating pattern being different from the second illuminating pattern, and the first illuminating pattern being different from the third illuminating pattern," and "a controller ... configured ... to sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, and third patterns repetitively, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being above the value, and to sequentially energize the array of illuminating elements in the first, second, third, and second patterns repetitively, thereby indicating a bill acceptance rate being below the value," as recited in claim 19. Rather, Juds discloses a bill acceptor that continues to receive and evaluate any inserted bill.

Accordingly, claim 19 and dependent claims 20 – 25 and 30 are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above.

Claim 27 is similarly directed to a "method of operating a bill acceptor of a gaming machine" that includes, among other things, "automatically, repetitively, and sequentially activating, when the bill acceptance rate is above a threshold, a plurality of illuminating elements

in first, second, and third patterns," and "automatically, repetitively, and sequentially activating when the bill acceptance rate drops below the threshold, the plurality of illuminating elements in first, second, third, and second patterns."

Neither Hand, Winters nor Juds, either alone or in combination, teaches or suggests all elements of claim 27. Therefore, claim 27 and dependent claim 31 are allowable for at least the reasons set forth above.

Newly added dependent claims 30 and 31 dependent from claims 19 and 27, respectively, and specify an impression, for example, a converging arrow, with the first, second, and third illuminating patterns. Applicant respectfully submits that support of an impression can be found in the Specification. For example, Applicant has discussed in paragraph [0048] that "[i]t will be appreciated that this happens reasonably quickly to create the impression of the LED's 62 being illuminated towards the slot 44 to create the impression of something being fed towards the slot 44 to act as an attracting means to a patron wishing to insert a bill into the bill acceptor 24.2." (Paragraph [0048])

No new matter has been added.

Conclusion

Applicant respectfully submits that all of claims 19 – 25, 27, 30 and 31 are allowable. In the event that the Examiner believes a telephone interview with the undersigned Applicant's Representative would be helpful in advancing prosecution of this patent application, the undersigned is available for telephone consultation during normal business hours.

Respectfully submitted,

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